

Glaring red flag as Treasury DOGE team discloses bank stock holdings

Story by Michael Stratford

The Trump administration official overseeing the Treasury Department's massive financial operations reported owning stock in many of the large banks and companies that do business with the department, according to disclosures obtained by POLITICO.

Tom Krause, who is also the lead official for Treasury's DOGE team, [reported hundreds of thousands](#) of dollars' worth of shares in a wide range of financial companies, including those that provide services to the unit Krause oversees.

He and two other Treasury DOGE team members — [Todd Newnam](#) and [Linda Whitridge](#)— also reported owning shares of Intuit, the parent company of TurboTax, which has lobbied heavily against IRS Direct File, a program targeted for elimination by Elon Musk and DOGE.

Krause, who is also the CEO of Cloud Software Group, has been leading Treasury's DOGE team since January. In February, he also [took on the duties of Treasury's fiscal assistant secretary](#) after David Lebryk, a longtime career official, resigned amid a clash over DOGE's access to the payments systems.

As the top official overseeing Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Krause is at the helm of agency operations that include running the federal payments system and managing the cash and debt that finances the government.

Among his financial holdings were hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of shares of JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, PNC and U.S. Bank. They are [among the companies](#) that provide financial services to the Bureau of the Fiscal Service as it disburses trillions of dollars of payments each year and seeks to collect debt owed to the government.

He disclosed investments in other banks, such as Wells Fargo, Deutsche Bank, Morgan Stanley and Santander, which are [among the financial institutions](#) that purchase U.S. debt securities through Treasury auctions managed by the Fiscal Service.

In addition, Krause, who is one of the officials leading Treasury's efforts to modernize its IT and financial infrastructure, disclosed owning shares of big government contractors like Accenture and large tech firms like Oracle, Google and Amazon.

It's not clear whether he and the other DOGE team members have been required to divest from any of their financial holdings. After filing his initial financial paperwork in March, Krause disclosed in [two additional filings](#) a range of purchases and sales of assets, but none included any of his bank stock holdings.

"These Treasury and IRS employees are following all ethics laws and guidelines, including policies concerning recusals," a Treasury spokesperson said in a statement. Krause did not immediately respond to a separate request for comment. Newnam and Whitridge also did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Several former Treasury officials and government ethics experts said the disclosures raise ethics concerns.

"It's a massive, glaring red flag of a conflict of interest here," said Dylan Hedtler-Gaudette, the director of government at the Project on Government Oversight. "A person at this level of [the] Treasury Department should absolutely not have direct financial ties to the industries and the companies that he or she is in part responsible for overseeing."

Don Hammond, who previously served as Treasury's fiscal assistant secretary, said there's a wide range of banks and financial companies that would be "extremely problematic" for someone in that role to be invested in because they're service providers to Treasury. Other categories of potential conflicts include large IT contractors and the financial institutions that have an interest in how Treasury operates its sale of government debt, he said.

Several large banks provide Treasury with lockbox services, payment collection services, and electronic processing services for taxes. “JP Morgan Chase and Bank of America are huge, critical vendors to Treasury,” Hammond said. The fiscal assistant secretary “plays a predominant role in determining the sourcing of services, the manner in which payments are conducted, and how processing is done,” he said.

Julie Brinn Siegel, who was Treasury’s deputy chief of staff during the Biden administration, sharply criticized the DOGE team members’ investments in tax preparation software maker Intuit, which has been lobbying against the IRS Direct File program.

“The DOGE Team at Treasury killed free tax filing software, is outsourcing foundational technical infrastructure, and firing the cops who keep our financial system safe from catastrophe,” she said. “They also have large holdings in the exact tax prep, government contracting and financial services companies that will profit from their actions. Who are they working for?”

The Biden-era program, which the Trump administration kept for this year, allows taxpayers to pay their taxes for free directly to the IRS rather than use private sector tax preparation software. The [Associated Press reported](#) last month that the administration plans to end the Direct File initiative, months after [Musk posted in February](#) that his team had “deleted” the government group working on it.

The financial disclosures from Treasury’s DOGE team also come amid a political and legal battle over DOGE’s access to the Treasury payment system.

Democrats have blasted the administration for allowing DOGE to access sensitive payment databases, and federal employee unions have accused Treasury of violating federal privacy laws.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has defended DOGE’s work as a much-needed effort to overhaul antiquated technology systems and payment processing, [even as he has sparred with Musk over leadership at the IRS](#).

After several courts temporarily blocked DOGE's access to the payment system, the administration has won several efforts to remove those restrictions.

A federal judge in New York is weighing a request by Treasury to dissolve the final remaining prohibition on DOGE employees getting access to the sensitive payment system.